

House, we are not deluded by a false hope that Iraq will suddenly transform itself into a nation of peace and tranquility with a surge of U.S. troops. Every indicator—military, economic and social—demonstrates that U.S. troops and American taxpayers are bearing an overwhelming burden on behalf of a nation that is broken and an Iraqi political leadership that refuses to act to retain sovereignty over their own nation.

Iraqis must take responsibility for the future of their nation, not U.S. troops. The only solution that can be achieved and sustained in Iraq is through political dialogue, not expanded military action by a foreign army. President Bush's failed policy has U.S. troops doing the job Iraqi soldiers and police should be doing. The veto of this legislation not only strips General Petraeus and all our commanders on the ground of any leverage to hold Iraq's political leaders accountable, it ensures that U.S. troops will continue being engaged in door-to-door searches, Baghdad foot patrols and raids on torture centers run by Iraqi security forces.

Last month, 104 Americans were killed in Iraq. The President's surge is not creating security for Iraqis, but has placed U.S. troops at greater risk. In March, 2,762 Iraqi civilians and policemen were killed. In April thousands more Iraqis were killed. On Monday, sixty Iraqis were killed, including the thirteen corpses found in Baghdad, "all blindfolded, handcuffed and shot in the head" according to the Washington Post.

These are not just numbers, they are lives. They are the lives of men and women, children as well, American soldiers and Iraqi civilians, killed as part of a bloody civil war. More than 50,000 Iraqi are fleeing their country every month. Two million Iraqis are now refugees and another 1.9 million Iraqis are internally displaced because of sectarian killings, ethnic cleansing and civil war. For my colleagues who warn about a horrific humanitarian crisis if this legislation becomes law, why do you ignore the horrific humanitarian crisis that is taking place right now as a result of the failed policies of this White House?

I will vote to override this veto. This legislation starts the process of ending the war in Iraq. This legislation not only holds the Iraqis accountable, it holds President Bush accountable as well. This war started because of distortions, false information and the determination of the Bush White House to deceive the American people, not a threat to our national security. It has always been a war of choice and an unjust war. The empty rhetoric from the Republicans in this chamber claims that this legislation puts the American people at risk, yet it is their stay the course support for a disastrous Iraq policy that harms America. My Republican colleagues' rejection of accountability standards, benchmarks for success, and an exit strategy from Iraq is an indication of their blind loyalty to President Bush, his failed leadership and a perpetuation of the deceit that brought us the Iraq War.

I urge all my colleagues to vote to override President Bush's veto of H.R. 1591 and let us start down the path of successfully ending the war in Iraq.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM FEENEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. FEENEY. Madam Speaker, I would like to express my regret for missing votes on the House floor on Thursday, April 26, 2007. A close childhood friend died and I had to return home. I left directly after the vote on the Conference Report for H.R. 1591 vote on April 25, 2007.

PRESBYTERIAN HOMES INC. 80TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Presbyterian Homes, Inc., located in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, for reaching its 80th anniversary.

Presbyterian Homes, Inc., (PHI), originated in 1927 when Mrs. Ellen Parker donated her farmhouse to care for 10 older women from Central Pennsylvania. Today, PHI is dedicated to providing high-quality, affordable healthcare, housing, and retirement services to older Americans in 19 communities.

More than 2,500 administrators, physicians, nurses, and other healthcare staff provide care to over 5,100 residents of PHI. Throughout its system of care, PHI provides independent living facilities, assisted living and personal care, skilled nursing care, specialized Alzheimer's and dementia care, rehabilitation therapy, adult day services, and operates a meals-on-wheels program.

Madam Speaker, please join with me congratulating Presbyterian Homes, Inc., on their 80th anniversary. I wish them luck as they begin their traveling exhibit which makes its debut in the Pennsylvania State Capitol building in May.

RECOGNIZING THE WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING SQUAD

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Cheerleading Squad at Washington Township High School. For the second year in a row, these outstanding student athletes won the Battle at the Capitol National Cheerleading Championship.

These young ladies are athletes in every sense of the word. They are dedicated and hardworking and spend up to 7 days a week practicing, cheering at basketball games and competing during the winter season while remaining excellent students. Team members include: Brooke Albano, Ashley Bonnette, Samantha Carfi, Victoria Collins, Bernadette Davis, Gabrielle DeMarco, Alyssa DeSilvio, Dana Dondici, Maria Freedman, Samantha Hersch, Holly Lloyd, Danielle Mace, Caitlin

McFall, Jenna Melchionna, Alyssa Mericle, Kristen Nisbet, Amanda Nowaczyk, Taryn Ortilp, Dana Pasqualone, Christy Pettit, Taylor Sartorio, Rachel Sims, Amanda Toton, Stephanie Toton, and Dana Villasin.

This year the Washington Township High School Cheerleaders competed against squads from around the country and won the Battle at the Capitol National Championship in Fairfax, Virginia. They also won the Olympic Conference Grand Championship for the eighth year in a row and the New Jersey Cheering and Dancing Coaches Association State Championship for the third year in a row.

Madam Speaker, I offer my congratulations to the Washington Township High School Cheerleaders on their National Championship win.

THE SAFE NURSING AND PATIENT CARE ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Safe Nursing and Patient Act with Representative STEVEN LATOURETTE (R-OH). Our legislation would achieve two vitally important goals. First, it would improve quality of care for patients across our country by assuring that nurses are not forced to work beyond the time they feel safe. Second, it would address our national nursing shortage by improving the working conditions that are causing nurses to leave their profession.

Assuring quality medical care and addressing our nursing shortage should not divide us on partisan lines. That's why I'm especially pleased to be working across the aisle with my friend from Ohio, Mr. LATOURETTE, in this important endeavor. This is legislation we've introduced together for several sessions of Congress. Given our changed environment in Congress, we are hopeful that we'll be able to enact it this time.

There are some 500,000 trained nurses in our country who are not working in their profession. While they leave nursing for many different reasons, nurses consistently cite concerns about the quality of care they feel that are able to provide in many health care settings today. Nurses are also greatly concerned about being forced to work mandatory overtime.

Listen to these words of a nurse in the State of Washington:

I have been a nurse for six years and most of the time I have worked in the hospital environment. It is difficult to tell you how terrible it is to "work scared" all the time. A mistake that I might make could easily cost someone their life and ruin mine. Every night at work we routinely "face the clock." All of us do without lunch and breaks and work overtime, often without pay, to ensure continuity of care for our patients. Yet, we are constantly asked to do more. It has become the norm for us to have patient assignments two and a half times greater than the staffing guidelines established by the hospital itself. I cannot continue to participate in this unsafe and irresponsible practice. So I am leaving, not because I don't love being a nurse, but because hospitals are not safe places: not for patients and not for nurses.